

THE 3 STRATEGIES OF HUANG SHIH- KUNG

I

SUPERIOR STRATEGY

The commander in chief's¹ method focuses on winning the minds of the valiant, rewarding and providing salaries to the meritorious, and having his will penetrate to the masses. Thus if he has the same likes as the masses, there is nothing he will not accomplish. If he has the same dislikes as the masses, there is nothing he will not overturn. Governing the state and giving security to one's family [is a question of] gaining the people. Losing the state and destroying one's family [is a question of] losing the people. All living beings² want to realize their ambitions.

The *Military Pronouncements*³ states: "The soft can control the hard, the weak can control the strong."⁴ The soft is Virtue. The hard is a brigand.⁵ The weak is what the people will help, the strong is what resentment will attack. The soft has situations in which it is established; the hard has situations in which it is applied; the weak has situations in which it is employed; and the strong has situations in which it is augmented. Combine these four and control them appropriately.

When neither the beginning nor end has yet become visible, no one is able to know them. Heaven and Earth are spiritual and enlightened, with the myriad things they change and transform. His changes and movements should not be constant. He should change and transform in response to the enemy. He does not precede affairs;⁶ when the enemy moves he immediately follows up. Thus he is able to formulate inexhaustible strategies and methods of control, sustain and complete the awesomeness of Heaven, bring tranquility and order to [the extremes of] the eight directions, and gather and settle the Nine Barbarians. Such a strategist is a teacher for an emperor or a true king.

Thus I say everyone covets strength, but rare are those capable of preserving the subtle. If someone can preserve the subtle he can protect his life. The Sage preserves it in order to respond to the slightest change in affairs. If he releases it then it will extend throughout the Four Seas. If he rolls it up it will

not fill a cup. He dwells in it, but without a house. He guards it, but without city walls. He stores it away in his breast, and enemy states submit.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "If one can be soft and hard, his state will be increasingly glorious! If one can be weak and strong, his state will be increasingly illustrious! If purely soft and purely weak, his state will inevitably decline. If purely hard and purely strong, his state will inevitably be destroyed."

Now the Way [Tao] to govern the state is to rely on Worthies and the people. If you trust the Worthy as if they were your belly and heart, and employ the people as if they were your four limbs, then all your plans will be accomplished. If your measures follow on each other as naturally as the four limbs, or the way the joints of the bones cooperate with each other, this is the Tao of Heaven, the natural. There is no gap in such skill.

The essence of the army and state lies in investigating the mind of the people and putting into effect the hundred duties of government.

Bring peace to those who are in danger. Give happiness to those who are afraid. Return those who rebel. Be indulgent to those who have grievances. Investigate [the complaints of] those who have legal suits. Raise up the lowly. Repress the strong. Destroy the enemy. Enrich the greedy. Use those that have desires. Conceal the fearful. Attract strategists. Investigate slanderers. Reproach the insulting.⁷ Eliminate the rebellious. Stifle those who act willfully. Diminish the arrogant. Summon those who turn their allegiance toward you. Give life to those who submit. Release those who surrender.

If you gain a strategic position, defend it. If you get a dangerous defile, block it. If you take difficult terrain, then establish encampments [to hold it]. If you secure a city, then cut it off [to enfeeble the generals]. If you seize territory, then divide it up [as a reward for the officers]. If you obtain riches, then distribute them [among your troops].

When the enemy moves observe him; when he approaches prepare for him. If the enemy is strong, be deferential [to make him arrogant]. If the enemy is well rested, then leave him.⁸ If the enemy is insulting, then wait [for his *ch'i* to decline]. If the enemy is explosive, then soothe him. If the enemy is rebellious, then treat him with righteousness. If the enemy is sincere, then lead him [to abandon his perverse ruler].

Accord [with the enemy's actions]⁹ to initiate measures and repress him. Rely on the strategic configuration of power [*shih*] to destroy him. Spread false words and cause him to make errors.¹⁰ Set out your net to catch them.¹¹

When you gain something, do not keep it [for yourself]. If you occupy a territory, do not set up permanent defenses. If you seize [a city], do not [keep it for yourself] for long. If you establish [a new ruler], do not take the state

altars. Thus while you perform the actions yourself, those who gain by it are the officers. How does one know where the real profit lies? They become feudal lords, you become the emperor. Have the cities prepare to defend themselves, have the officers manage their appropriate positions.

Through the ages rulers managed to venerate their ancestors with the proper ceremonies, but few were able to treat the people as they should have been treated. Those who venerate their ancestors foster proper familial connections, but those who treat the people as they should be treated become rulers. To treat the people as they should be treated means concentrating on agriculture and sericulture and not disturbing the people during their vital seasonal occupations. It means keeping taxes and impositions to a minimum, not exhausting their wealth. If you impose few labor services, if you do not cause the people to be overly labored, then the state will be prosperous and the families will enjoy pleasure. Only thereafter should you select officers to control and supervise them.

Now what are termed “officers” are men of character and valor. Thus it is said, “Draw in their men of character and valor and the enemy’s state will be impoverished.” These valiant men are the trunk of a state. The common people are its root. If you have the trunk and secure the root, the measures of government will be implemented without resentment.

Now the essence of employing the army lies in respecting the forms of propriety [*li*] and making salaries generous. When the proper forms of propriety are followed, wise officers will be attracted. When salaries are generous, righteous officers will regard death lightly. Thus if when granting salaries to the Worthy you do not begrudge the expense and when rewarding the able are not dilatory, then the strength of your subordinates will be united while your enemy’s state will be reduced [as the capable abandon him].

The Way to employ men is to honor them with rank and supply them generously with material goods, for then the officers will come of their own accord. Welcome them according to the forms of propriety [*li*], stimulate them with righteousness, and then the officers will die [for the state].

Now those who command the army must share tastes and attitudes with the officers and men and confront both safety and danger with them,¹² for then the enemy can be attacked. Thus the army will attain full victory, and the enemy will be completely destroyed. In antiquity, when outstanding generals commanded armies, there was once a case where the commander was presented with a cask of sweet wine. The general had it poured into the river and shared the drinking of the wine with the officers and men as it flowed downstream. Now a cask of wine is unable to flavor a river of water, but the officers of the Three Armies were all motivated to fight to the death because the flavor and taste reached them personally.¹³

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "When the army's wells have not yet been completed, the general does not mention thirst. When the encampment has not yet been secured, the general does not speak about fatigue. When the army's cookstoves have not yet been lit, the general does not speak about hunger. In the winter he does not wear a fur robe; in the summer he does not use a fan; and in the rain he does not set up an umbrella."¹⁴ This is termed the proper form of behavior for a general.

He is with them in safety, he is united with them in danger. Thus his troops can be combined but cannot be forced apart. They can be employed but cannot be tired out. With his beneficence he ceaselessly gathers them together, with his plans he constantly unites them. Thus it is said that when you cultivate beneficence tirelessly, with one you can take ten thousand.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "The basis of the general's awesomeness is his commands and orders. The basis of complete victory in battle is military administration. The reason officers treat battle lightly is the employment of commands." Thus the general never rescinds an order. Rewards and punishments must be as certain as Heaven and Earth, for then the general can employ the men. When the officers and soldiers follow orders, the army can cross the border.

Now the one who unifies the army and wields its strategic power [*shih*] is the general. The ones that bring about conquest and defeat the enemy are the masses. Thus a disordered general cannot be employed to preserve an army, while a rebellious mass cannot be used to attack an enemy. If this sort of general attacks a city it cannot be taken, while if this type of army lays siege to a town it will not fall. If both are unsuccessful then the officers' strength will be exhausted. If it is exhausted then the general will be alone and the masses will be rebellious. If they try to hold defensive positions they will not be secure, while if they engage in battle they will turn and run. They are referred to as an "old army."

When the troops are "old," then the general's awesomeness will not be effective. When the general lacks awesomeness, then the officers and troops will disdain punishment. When they disdain punishment, the army will lose its organization into squads of five. When the army loses its squads of five, the officers and soldiers will abandon their positions and run off. When they flee, the enemy will take advantage of the situation. When the enemy seizes the opportunity to profit from this situation, the army will inevitably perish.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "The exemplary general, in his command of the army, governs men as he would want to be treated himself. Spreading his kindness and extending his beneficence, the strength of his officers is daily renewed. In battle they are like the wind arising; their attack is like the release of a pent-up river."¹⁵ Thus our army can be seen but not with-

stood, can be submitted to but not be conquered. If you lead the men in person, your soldiers will become the most valiant under Heaven.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "The army employs rewards as its external form and punishments as its internal substance." When rewards and punishments are clear, then the general's awesomeness is effected. When the proper officials are obtained, then the officers and troops are obedient. When those entrusted [with responsibility] are Worthies, enemy states will be fearful.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "Where the Worthy go they have no enemies before them." Thus officers can be deferred to, but they cannot be arrogant.¹⁶ The general can be pleased but cannot be troubled. Plans can be complex, but they cannot be doubted. When the officers are arrogant, their subordinates will not be submissive. When the general is troubled, his subordinates and troops will not trust each other. When plans are doubted, the enemy will be roused to confidence. If one proceeds to mount an attack under these conditions, chaos will result.

Now the general is the fate of the state. If he is able to manage the army and attain victory, the state will be secure and settled.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "The general should be able to be pure; able to be quiet; able to be tranquil; able to be controlled; able to accept criticism; able to judge disputes; able to attract and employ men; able to select and accept advice; able to know the customs of states; able to map mountains and rivers; able to discern defiles and difficulty; and able to control military authority [*ch'üan*]."

Thus it is said that the wisdom of the benevolent and Worthy, the thoughts and plans of the Sages and illuminated, the words of the wood carriers, the discussions in court, and the affairs of ascension and decline—all of these are what the general should hear about.

If the general can think of his officers as if thirsty, his plans will be followed. But if the general stifles advice, the valiant will depart. If plans are not followed, the strategists will rebel. If good and evil are treated alike, the meritorious officers will grow weary. If the general relies solely on himself, his subordinates will shirk all responsibility. If he brags, his assistants will have few attainments. If he believes slander, he will lose the hearts of the people. If he is greedy, treachery will be unchecked. If he is preoccupied with women, then the officers and troops will become licentious. If the general has a single one of these faults, the masses will not submit. If he is marked by two of them, the army will lack order; if by three of them, his subordinates will abandon him; if by four, the disaster will extend to the entire state!

The *Military Pronouncements* states: "For the general's plans one wants secrecy. For the officers and masses one wants unity. For attacking the enemy

one wants swiftness.” When the general’s plans are secret, treacherous impulses are thwarted. When the officers and masses are unified, then the heart of the army is united. When the attack on the enemy is swift, they will not have time to prepare. When the army has these three, their plans cannot be snatched away.

If the general’s plans leak out, the army will not be able to effect the strategic disposition of power [*shih*]. If external agents spy out internal affairs, the disaster that will befall the army cannot be controlled. If wealth¹⁷ is brought into the encampment, a myriad evildoers will assemble. If the general is marked by these three, the army will inevitably be defeated.

If the general does not carefully contemplate his course of action, his strategists will abandon him. If the general is not courageous, the officers and troops will be terrified. If the general moves the army recklessly, it will not be imposing. If he transfers his anger [to the innocent], the whole army will be afraid. As the *Military Pronouncements* states: “Contemplation and courage are what the general values; movement and anger are what the general employs.” These four are the general’s clear precepts.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “If the army lacks material resources, officers will not come. If the army does not have [ample] rewards, the officers will not go into battle [with the proper commitment].”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “Beneath fragrant bait there will certainly be dead fish. Beneath generous rewards there will certainly be courageous officers.”¹⁸ Thus the forms of propriety are what officers will turn to, while rewards are what they will die for. If you summon them with what attracts them and display what they will die for, then those you seek will come. But if you treat them respectfully and afterward express regret at doing so, then they will not remain with you. If you reward them and afterward regret it, then the officers will not respond to your commands. If you are tireless in effecting propriety and rewards, the officers will compete with each other to die.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “A state about to mobilize its army concentrates first on making its beneficence ample. A state about to attack and seize another concentrates on first nurturing the people.” Conquering the many with only a few [is a question of] beneficence. Conquering the strong with the weak [is a question of] people. Thus the good general, in nurturing his officers, treats them no differently than himself. Therefore, he is able to direct the Three Armies as if they were of one mind, and then his victory can be complete.

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “The key to using the army is to first investigate the enemy’s situation. Look into his granaries and armories, estimate his food stocks, divine his strengths and weaknesses, search out his nat-

ural advantages, and seek out his vacuities and fissures.” Thus if the state does not have the hardship of an army in the field yet is transporting grain, it must be suffering from emptiness. If the people have a sickly cast, they are impoverished.

If they are transporting provisions for a thousand *li*, the officers will have a hungry look. If they must gather wood and grass before they can eat, the army does not have enough food to pass one night. Accordingly, if someone transports provisions a thousand *li*, he lacks one year’s food; two thousand *li*, he lacks two years’ food; three thousand *li*, he lacks three years’ food. This is what is referred to as an “empty state.” When the state is empty, the people are impoverished. When the people are impoverished, then the government and populace are estranged. While the enemy attacks from without, the people steal from within. This is termed a situation of “inevitable collapse.”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When a ruler’s actions are cruelly violent, his subordinates will be hasty to implement harsh measures. When the taxes are onerous, impositions numerous, fines and punishments endless, while the people mutually injure and steal from each other, this is referred to as a ‘lost state.’ ”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When the secretly greedy [display] an external appearance of incorruptibility; prevarication and praise can gain fame; bureaucrats steal from the state to distribute their own beneficence, causing confusion in the ranks; and people adorn themselves and [feign] the proper countenance in order to attain high office, this is referred to as ‘the beginning of thievery.’ ”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “If administrative officials form parties and cliques, each advancing those with whom they are familiar; the state summons and appoints the evil and corrupt, while insulting and repressing the benevolent and worthy; officials turn their backs on the state and establish their personal interests; and men of equal rank disparage each other, this is termed ‘the source of chaos.’ ”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When strong clans assemble the evil, people without position are honored, and there are none who are not shaken by their majesty; when these practices proliferate and are intertwined they cultivate an image of virtue—establishing it through public beneficence—and they snatch the authority [*ch’üan*] belonging to those in official positions; when they insult the people below them, and within the state there is clamoring and backbiting, while the ministers conceal themselves and remain silent, this is ‘causing chaos at the root.’ ”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “Generation after generation they act treacherously, encroaching upon and stealing district offices. In advancing and retiring they seek only their own convenience, and they forge and

distort documents, thereby endangering the ruler. They are referred to as ‘the state’s treacherous ones.’”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When the officials are many but the people few; there is no distinction between the honored and lowly; the strong and weak insult each other; and no one observes the prohibitions or adheres to the laws, then these effects will extend to the ruler, and the state will reap the misfortune.”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When the ruler regards the good as good but does not advance them, while he hates the evil but does not dismiss them; when the Worthy are hidden and covered, while the unworthy hold positions, then the state will suffer harm.”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When the branches [the ruler’s relatives] and leaves [the powerful families] are strong and large, forming parties and occupying positions of authority so that the lowly and mean insult the honored, growing more powerful with the passing of time, while the ruler cannot bear to dismiss them, then the state will suffer defeat from it.”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When deceitful ministers hold superior positions, the entire army will be clamoring and contentious. They rely on their awesomeness to grant personal favors, and act in a manner that offends the masses. Advancement and dismissal lack any basis, the evil are not dismissed, and men seek gain with any appearance possible. They monopolize appointments for themselves, and in advancements and dismissals boast of their own merits. They slander and vilify those of great Virtue, and make false accusations against the meritorious. Whether good or evil, all are treated the same by them. They gather and detain affairs of government so that commands and orders are not put into effect. They create a harsh government, changing the ways of antiquity and altering what was common practice. When the ruler employs such wanton characters, he will certainly suffer disaster and calamity.”

The *Military Pronouncements* states: “When evil men of courage praise each other, they obfuscate the ruler’s wisdom. When both criticism and praise arise together, they stop up the ruler’s wisdom. When each person praises those he favors, the ruler loses the loyal.”

Accordingly, if the ruler investigates unusual words, he will discover their beginnings. If he engages scholars and Worthies, then evil men of courage will withdraw. If the ruler appoints [virtuous] men of experience and age, the myriad affairs will be well managed. If he respectfully invites the recluses and hidden scholars to take positions, the officers will then fulfill their functions. If plans extend to the firewood carriers, achievements will be predictable. If he does not lose the minds of the people, his Virtue will flourish.

II

MIDDLE STRATEGY

Now the Three August Ones¹⁹ never spoke, but their transformations flowed throughout the Four Seas. Thus the world had no one to whom to attribute the accomplishments.

The Emperors embodied Heaven and took Earth as their model. They spoke and issued orders, and the world attained Great Peace. Ruler and minister yielded the credit for this to each other, while all within the Four Seas were transformed without the common people being conscious of how the changes came about. Therefore, in employing subordinates they did not rely on the forms of propriety or rewards. There was the beauty of accomplishments and no harm.

Kings governed men by means of the Tao, causing their hearts to be compliant and their wills to be submissive while also establishing restrictive measures and making preparations against decline. All [the feudal lords] within the Four Seas assembled [at their courts], and the duty of kingship was not neglected. Even though they made military preparations, they never suffered the misfortune of warfare. Rulers did not doubt their subordinates, while subordinates had faith in their rulers. The state was settled, the ruler secure, and bureaucrats could resign with righteousness, so they also were able to have beauty without harm.

The hegemon governed their officers by virtue of authority—bonding them through trust, motivating them with rewards. When that trust declined the officers grew distant, and when rewards became inadequate they would not submit to orders.

The *Army's Strategic Power*²⁰ states: "When the army is mobilized and advances into the field, the sole exercise of power lies with the general. If in advancing or withdrawing the court interferes, it will be difficult to attain success."

The *Army's Strategic Power* states: "Employ the wise, courageous, greedy, and stupid. The wise take pleasure in establishing their achievements. The

courageous love to put their will into effect. The greedy fervently pursue profits. The stupid have little regard for death. Employ them through their emotions, for this is the military's subtle exercise of authority [*ch'üan*]."

The *Army's Strategic Power* states: "Do not allow your disputatious officers to discuss the enemy's good points because they may delude the masses. Do not allow the benevolent to control the finances, for they will dispense too much and become attached to the lower ranks."

The *Army's Strategic Power* states: "Prohibit mediums and shamans from divining about the army's good or bad fortune on behalf of the officials and officers."

The *Army's Strategic Power* states: "One does not employ righteous officers with material wealth alone. Thus the righteous will not die for the malevolent. The wise will not make plans on behalf of an obtuse ruler." The ruler cannot be without Virtue, for if he lacks Virtue his ministers will rebel. He cannot be without awesomeness, for if he lacks awesomeness he will lose his authority [*ch'üan*]. A minister cannot be without virtue, for if he lacks virtue then he has nothing with which to serve his ruler. He cannot be without awesomeness, for if he lacks awesomeness the state will be weak. If he is too awesome then he himself will be overturned.

Therefore the Sage Kings—in governing the world—observed the flourishing and decline [of the seasons], measured human gains and losses, and created forms of administration. Thus the feudal lords have two armies, the regional earls have three armies, and the Son of Heaven has six.²¹ When the world is turbulent, rebellion and contrariness are born. When the king's bountiful influence is exhausted, the feudal lords swear oaths [of alliance] and attack each other.

If your state's Virtue and strategic configuration of power [*shih*] are the same as those of the enemy so that neither state has the means to overcome the other, then you must win the minds of the valiant, share likes and dislikes with the common people, and only thereafter attack the enemy in accord with changes in the balance of power [*ch'üan*]. Thus without stratagems you have no means to resolve suspicions and settle doubts. Without rumor and the unorthodox you have no means to destroy evildoers and stop invaders. Without secret plans you have no means to be successful.

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The Sage embodies Heaven, the Worthy model on Earth, and the wise find their teachers in antiquity. Thus the *Three Strategies* has been written for a period of decadence. The "Superior Strategy" establishes the forms of propriety and rewards, discriminates between evildoers and the valiant, and makes

clear success and defeat. The “Middle Strategy” marks out the differences in Virtue and behavior and makes manifest changes in the balance of power [*ch’üan*]. The “Inferior Strategy” arrays the Tao and Virtue, investigates security and danger, and makes clear the calamity of harming the Worthy.

Thus if the ruler thoroughly understands the “Superior Strategy” he will be able to employ the Worthy and seize his enemies. If he thoroughly understands the “Middle Strategy” he will be able to employ and control his generals and unite the people. If he thoroughly understands the “Inferior Strategy” he will be able to discern the sources of flourishing and decline and understand the regulations for governing a state. If his subordinates thoroughly understand the “Middle Strategy” they will be able to achieve merit and preserve themselves.

When the soaring birds have all been slain, then good bows are stored away.²² When enemy states have been extinguished, ministers in charge of planning are lost. Here “lost” does not mean they lose their lives but that [the ruler] has taken away their awesomeness and removed their authority [*ch’üan*]. He enfeoffs them in court, at the highest ranks of his subordinates, in order to manifest their merit. He presents them with excellent states in the central region in order to enrich their families, and bestows beautiful women and valuable treasures on them in order to please their hearts.

Now once the masses have been brought together they cannot be hastily separated. Once the awesomeness of authority [*ch’üan*] has been granted it cannot be suddenly shifted. Returning the forces and disbanding the armies [after the war] are critical stages in preservation and loss. Thus weakening [the commanding general] through appointment to new positions, taking [his authority] by granting him a state, is referred to as a “hegemon’s strategy.” Thus the hegemon’s actions incorporate a mixed approach [of Virtue and power]. Preserving the altars of state, gathering those of character and courage—both are encouraged by the strategic power [*shih*] of the “Middle Strategy.” Thus [to exercise such] power [*shih*] the ruler must be very secretive.

III

INFERIOR STRATEGY

Now one who can sustain the imperiled under Heaven can control the security of All under Heaven. One who can remove the distress of those under Heaven will be able to enjoy the pleasure [of governing] All under Heaven. One who can rescue those under Heaven suffering from misfortune will be able to gain the prosperity of All under Heaven. Therefore, when the ruler's munificence extends to the people, Worthy men will give their allegiance. When his munificence reaches the multitudinous insects, then Sages will ally with him. Whomever the Worthy give their allegiance to, his state will be strong. Whomever the Sages support, [under him] the six directions will be unified. One seeks the Worthy through Virtue, one attracts Sages with the Tao. If the Worthy depart the state will become weak; if the Sages depart the state will grow depraved. Weakness is a step on the road to danger, depravity is a sign of doom.

The government of a Worthy causes men to submit with their bodies. The government of a Sage causes men to submit with their minds. When their bodies submit the beginning can be planned; when their minds submit the end can be preserved. Their physical submission is attained through the forms of propriety; their mental submission is attained through music.²³

What I refer to as music is not the sound of musical instruments—the stones, metal [bells], strings, and bamboo [pipes]. Rather, I refer to people taking pleasure in their families, clans, occupations, capitals and towns, orders of government, the Tao, and Virtue. One who rules the people in this fashion creates music in order to bring measure to their activities, to ensure that they do not lose their essential harmony. Thus the Virtuous ruler uses music to give pleasure to the people; the debauched ruler uses music to give pleasure to himself. One who provides pleasure to others endures and prospers; one who pleasures himself does not endure, but perishes.

One who abandons what is nearby to plan for what is distant will labor without success. One who abandons the distant to plan for the nearby will

be at ease and attain lasting results. A government marked by ease has many loyal ministers. A government marked by labor has many resentful people. Thus it is said: "One who concentrates on broadening his territory will waste his energies; one who concentrates on broadening his Virtue will be strong." One who is able to hold what he possesses will be secure; one who is greedy for what others have will be destroyed. A government that verges on being destroyed will entangle later generations in the misfortune. One who enacts policies beyond proper measure will, even though successful, inevitably be defeated. Indulging oneself while instructing others is contrary [to natural order]; rectifying yourself and transforming others accords [with the Tao]. Contrariness is a summons to chaos; according with is the essence of order.

The Tao, Virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and the forms of propriety—these five—are one body. The Tao is what men tread; Virtue is what men gain; benevolence is what men approach; righteousness is what men consider appropriate; and the forms of propriety are what people embody. You cannot lack any one of them.

Thus rising in the early morning, sleeping at night are constraints of the forms of propriety. Punishing brigands and taking revenge are decisions of righteousness. The compassionate heart is an expression of benevolence. Gaining [what you want] yourself, and gaining it for other people, is the path of Virtue. Ensuring that people are equal and do not lose their place, this is the transformation of the Tao.

What proceeds from the ruler and descends to the minister is termed "commands." What is recorded on bamboo strips and silk rolls is termed "orders." What is initiated and implemented is termed "government." Now when commands are disobeyed,²⁴ then orders are not put into effect. When orders are not put into effect, then government is not established. When government is not established, then the Tao does not penetrate [the realm]. When the Tao does not penetrate, then depraved ministers will prevail. When depraved ministers prevail, then the ruler's majesty is injured.

To welcome Worthies a thousand *li* away, the road is far; to bring in the unworthy, the road is quite near. For this reason the enlightened ruler abandons the near and takes the distant. Therefore, he is able to complete his achievements. He honors [worthy] men, and his subordinates all exhaust their energies.

If you dismiss one good [man], then a myriad good [acts] will decline. If you reward one evil [man], then a myriad evils will be drawn to you. When the good are rewarded and the evil suffer punishment, the state will be secure, and the multitudes of good people will come.

When the masses are doubtful, there are no settled states. When the masses are deluded, there are no governed people. When doubts are settled and the deluded returned, then the state can be secure. When one order is contravened, then a hundred orders will be disobeyed. When one evil act is done, a hundred evils will form. Thus if you put good into effect amidst a compliant people and impose harsh measures on wicked people, orders will be implemented without any discontent.

Employing the discontented to govern the discontented is termed "contrary to Heaven."²⁵ Having the vengeful control the vengeful, an irreversible disaster will result. Govern the people by causing them to be peaceful. If one attains peace through purity, then the people will have their places, and the world will be tranquil.

If those who oppose the ruler are honored, while the greedy and uncivilized are enriched, then even if there is a Sage ruler he cannot realize a well-ordered government. If those who oppose the ruler are punished, while the greedy and uncivilized are arrested, then a transformation will be effected and the myriad evils eliminated.

Pure, incorruptible officers cannot be enticed with rank and salary. Self-constrained, righteous officers cannot be coerced with awesomeness or punishment. Thus when the enlightened ruler seeks the Worthy, he must observe what will attract them. To attract pure, incorruptible officers he perfects his observance of the forms of propriety. To attract self-constrained, righteous officers he perfects himself in the Tao. Only thereafter will they be attracted and the ruler's reputation preserved.

The Sage and perfected man perceive the sources of flourishing and decline, understand the beginnings of success and defeat, have attained true knowledge of the crux [*chi*] of governing and turbulence, and know the measure of coming and going. Such men, even in poverty, will not hold a position in a doomed state. Though lowly, they will not eat the rice of a turbulent country. They conceal their names and cling to the Way [Tao]. When the proper time comes they move, reaching the pinnacle which a subject can attain. When they encounter Virtue that accords with them, they will establish extraordinary achievements. Thus their Tao is lofty, and their names will be praised in later generations.

The Sage King does not take any pleasure in using the army. He mobilizes it to execute the violently perverse and punish the rebellious. Now using the righteous to execute the unrighteous is like releasing the Yangtze and Yellow rivers to douse a torch, or pushing a person tottering at the edge of an abyss. Their success is inevitable! Thus [when action should be taken] one who hes-

itates and is quiet, without advancing, seriously injures all living beings. Weapons are inauspicious instruments, and the Tao of Heaven abhors them. However, when their employment is unavoidable it accords with the Tao of Heaven. Now men in the Tao are like fish in water. If they have water they will live; if not they will die. Thus the ruler must constantly be afraid and dare not lose the Tao.

When prominent, powerful families gain control of official duties, the state's awesomeness weakens. When the power of life and death lies with the prominent, powerful families, the state's strategic power [*shih*] is exhausted. If the prominent, powerful families bow their heads in submission, then the state can long endure. When the power of life and death lies with the ruler, then the state can be secure.

When the four classes of people²⁶ have nothing for their use, then the state will lack all stores. When the four classes have enough for their use, then the state will be secure and happy.

When Worthy ministers are brought inside government, depraved ones will be outside. When depraved ministers are inside, Worthy ministers will perish. When within and without lose what is appropriate, disaster and disorder will last through generations.

If the major ministers doubt the ruler, a myriad evils will accumulate and gather. If the ministers usurp the respect that should be due the ruler, then the upper and lower ranks will be confused. When the ruler [effectively] occupies the position of a minister, upper and lower [ranks] lose their order.

If someone injures the Worthy, the calamity will extend three generations. If someone conceals the Worthy, he himself will suffer the harm. If someone is jealous of the Worthy, his reputation will not be complete. If someone advances the Worthy, the blessings will flow to his sons and grandsons. Thus the ruler is anxious to advance the Worthy and thereby make his good name illustrious.

If you profit one person but injure a hundred, the people will leave the city. If you profit one person and harm ten thousand, [the populace of] the state will think about dispersing. If you get rid of one and thereby profit a hundred, the people will long for your munificence. If you get rid of one and thereby profit ten thousand, your government will not be disordered.